

Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg
Institute for Advanced Study

Fiction ∫ *science*
MEETS

Cultivating ideas for a new program

WORKSHOP
NOVEMBER 18, 2011

Organizer:
Susan M. Gaines
University of Bremen

Venue:

Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg
Institute for Advanced Study
Lehmkuhlenbusch 4
27753 Delmenhorst
Germany
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Program

Workshop Objectives

- Establish communication and understanding between critical members of the FMS network of novelists, humanities scholars, and scientists and determine their mutual and divergent interests and potential contributions to FMS
- Contribute to the design of the FMS program
- Help establish a basis for application to the Volkswagen Foundation funding initiative, "Key Topics for Science and Society"

Agenda

9:10 **Greeting in Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg foyer, brief tour**

(Reto Weiler, Dorothe Poggel)

9:30 **The Fiction Meets Science Program: plans and challenges**

(Susan Gaines)

NOVELISTS' PERSPECTIVES

9:50 **Authors' experiences with science in fiction**

(Simon Mawer, Jennifer Rohn, Bernhard Kegel, Susan Gaines: ~15 minutes each + questions and discussion)

Open discussion points: What's different about science? Does it require special approaches to the elements of fiction? To research? Would (will) you do it again? What about writing outside one's field of expertise?

11:15 **Coffee Break**

11:30 **FMS for novelists: discussion**

What can we, as scientists and humanities scholars, offer?

Fellowship structure, methods for attracting/choosing fellows, a scientific novel prize; publishing (US/UK, Germany, translations?)

SCHOLARLY APPROACHES

12:00 **New Projects Under Construction**

(~10-15 minutes each + questions and discussion)

- Science as an Issue in Contemporary Literary Communication - How and to what extent is fiction a topic in scientific journals, and how do the leading review media deal with science in fiction? *(Anton Kirchhofer, Anna Auguscik)*
- How to be a scientist and be human at the same time: scientists as problematic characters in contemporary fiction—stereotypes and beyond. *(Anton Kirchhofer)*
- The emergence of new scientific concepts as explored in contemporary fiction: scientific, social, and political catalysts and deterrents. *(Norbert Schaffeld)*

- Some open discussion points: What can we, as novelists and scientists, contribute? Is an author's input valuable to the scholar? Is it possible or desirable for a scholar to discuss an author's book with the author, or in his or her presence?

13:10 **Lunch**

14:40 **Genre and Experiment** (brief comments and discussion)
(*Martina Wagner, Julia Bodenburg, Anna Thiemann*)

15:10 **Other scholarly projects: open forum for new ideas**
(*any/all participants*)

FMS Leading questions revisited: Are we asking the right questions? Which remain unaddressed and how can we address them? What's missing? What about the German literature?

SCIENTISTS' PERSPECTIVES

15:45 **Scientists reading science novels?**

- Introduction: LabLit.com and the Royal Institution Fiction Lab (*Jennifer Rohn*); 2011 "New Literature of Science and Fiction Workshop" (*Susan Gaines/Jürgen Rullkötter*)
- Scientists' Panel (*Jürgen Rullkötter, Hildegard Westphal, Gerold Wefer, Stefan Bornholdt, Carmelita Görg, Reto Weiler*)
- Some discussion points: What is your personal experience or expectation of fictional representations of science? Beyond their roles as ad hoc consultants for novelists and literature scholars, how can FMS scientists, their students, institutes, or sciences benefit from the program?
- Open discussion and brainstorming (all participants): Science novel book reading groups, graduate seminars, workshops, presentations by FMS novelists in your departments or institutes (as bonding activity for members of multi-disciplinary institutes?), enrichment programs at conferences and summer schools, public readings, novels as teaching tools....

16:30 **Coffee and cake**

17:00 **Communal projects and products: open discussion**

- FMS Conference: Novelists, literary scholars, and scientists together—an exciting proposition, or too diffuse and difficult?
- Small working groups for longer periods, or large conference?
- Anthology of book essays by scholars, novelists and scientists
- Haus der Wissenschaft: Reading series, perhaps paired with FMS Fellow at the HWK, with commentaries by scientists? (language issues)
- Other ideas

17:20 **Designing the grant proposal: open discussion**

- Science in fiction as a "key topic for science and society": making a case for the literary novel in the age of film and media

- Are we original? How do we distinguish ourselves from other science and humanities endeavors? From studies of "genre science fiction"
- Program components revisited
- Concrete first steps (e.g. first fellows, named projects)
- Visibility and name recognition
- Other considerations?

19:00

Dinner at the Graftwerk (transportation provided)

The Graftwerk is a short walk from the hotel and the Delmenhorst train station; regular trains to Bremen and Oldenburg run until midnight.

Wine and beer, courtesy of FMS's first private sponsor:

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science-based personalization